



# **PSC NEWS**

## **Missouri Public Service Commission**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **PSC STAFF TO PROCEED WITH INVESTIGATION OF UTILITY SERVICE AND BILLING PRACTICES**

JEFFERSON CITY—The Missouri Public Service Commission has directed the PSC Staff to continue with its investigation examining the estimated billing practices of Missouri electric, natural gas and water utilities under PSC jurisdiction. The vote was 4-1.

An investigatory case was initially opened by the Commission on September 14, 2006. As a first step in this case, the Commission has directed the PSC Staff to survey the various utilities in an attempt to discern the extent of the problem. In particular, the Commission is seeking information to the following questions:

- ✓ How many estimated monthly bills did each utility issue in the past year?
- ✓ How often did each utility obtain actual meter readings for accounts which it issued an estimated bill in the last year?
- ✓ How often did each utility true-up estimated bills with actual meter readings in the last year?

The Commission has also directed the PSC Staff to consult with the Office of the Public Counsel, consumer groups and the utility companies to determine whether other questions should be asked. After the PSC Staff receives information from the survey, they will conduct spot audits to determine the extent to which estimated bills reflect actual meter readings for the various utilities.

Survey questions will be sent to all of Missouri's investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities, as well as the six largest investor-owned water utilities (Missouri-American Water Company, Raytown Water Company, The Empire District Electric Company, Tri-States Utility, U.S. Water Company and Aqua-Missouri).

Survey questions will go out by December 1, 2006 and Staff is to begin spot-audits by February 1, 2007. The PSC Staff is to file a report on its findings by May 1, 2007.